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Question1: Farm policy should 1) assist landowners in embracing more income-producing options for their land, and 2) engage the next generation- the heirs of today's aging landowners. We must show the "next generation" a sustainable future in farming and forestry.

There is a significant overlap between family farms and family forests. Thirty-eight percent of farms have woodlands; 8% of all farmland is forested; and farmers own 22% of all family forestland.

The increasing parcelization of private woodlands poses problems for sustainable forestry, including landowner education and technical assistance, reduced economies of scale for harvesting and other management practices, maintenance of biodiversity, and controlling the spread of invasive plants and insects.

It is important that Farm Bill programs address both the cost-share and incentive needs of those already practicing forest management as well as the education and technical assistance needs of those not currently managing. Tools such as peer-to-peer outreach and utilization of non-profit organizations will be necessary to stretch tight federal dollars and maximize impact.

USDA Forest Service data show that most family forest owners give low priority to timber harvesting and are more interested in recreational, aesthetic and other goals for their woodlands.

There is also an increasing recognition of the cross-sectoral benefits provided by forest lands. In addition to the significant economic benefits realized from timber and non-timber products, forests provide clean water, clean air, carbon sequestration and other benefits to rural and urban citizens. These ecosystem benefits are not adequately addressed in current farm and rural policy.

Question2:

Question3: There are over 350 million acres of family forest land in the United States, about 25% of which is on farms and ranches. This compares to 370 million acres of cropland, 120 million acres of pastureland, and 400 million acres of rangeland.

At the present time, however, only a very small percentage of federal funds are being used to provide technical assistance or incentives for family forest owners to manage their woods sustainably and productively. For example, no new funds have been released in the 2006 budget for FLEP; less than 5% of EQIP funds were used for private forestry conservation incentives in 2005; and currently, CSP may only provide funds for forested land that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation.

Changes in the design of these programs and in the provision of assistance and resources would result in millions of additional acres of family forest land coming under sustainable management. Non-profits, community-based organizations, and forestry extension need adequate assistance and funding to effectively assist private woodland owners with the sustainable management of their lands.

In particular, small and low income woodland owners, landowners who aren't currently managing their woods, and next generation owners would be more effectively reached through community-based efforts.

Question4: Sustainable management of family forests and the planting of trees on marginal crop, pasture and rangeland provide numerous conservation benefits and ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, erosion control, plant and animal biodiversity, monitoring and control of invasive species, and protection of water quality.

A fundamental goal of our farm policy must be to increase the economic feasibility for private owners of owning and sustainably managing these resources in order to maintain these many public benefits. Farm policy should provide more cost-sharing resources to landowners for sustainable forest management, forest restoration, and development of sustainable forest production systems to make forestland ownership more rewarding.

In addition, farm policy should provide supportive infrastructure to efforts to provide payments to landowners for ecosystem services such as watershed protection and carbon sequestration.

As mentioned in the response to Question 3, changes in the design of EQIP, FLEP, CSP and CRP, particularly to better provide education and outreach assistance as well as financial incentives, would result in millions of additional acres of family forest land coming under sustainable management as well as the conversion of marginal farmland to sustainable forest land.

Question5: About half of the wood harvested each year in the United States comes from family forests. However, less than 20% of this forestland has a forest management plan, resulting in a decrease in sustainability. Improved management would result in more income to forestland owners, more jobs for foresters and loggers, an increase in domestic sourcing of saw wood and pulpwood by forestry companies, a more favorable environment for the development of local, value-added forestry enterprises, and economic, social, and environmental benefits to local communities. More productive and sustainable approaches to agroforestry (the integrated production of trees and non-tree crops or animals) would simultaneously benefit agricultural and forestry production as well as providing ecosystem services.

Existing Farm Bill programs could be modified to provide for increased education and technical assistance to family forest owners and for financial incentives to develop and implement inventory-based forest management plans, such as Forest Stewardship Plans.

Cultivating forest-based economic development gives rural communities a competitive economic advantage by basing development on local resources and expertise rather than relying on recruiting outside businesses. Economic development based on the sustainable harvesting and local processing of local forest resources results in greater economic returns

to the local community while maintaining local ownership, conserving natural resources, and preserving local traditions.

Community economic development and enterprise development programs for a forest-based industry:

- ? Support development of local value-added businesses
- ? Support expansion of local forest management businesses (foresters, loggers, etc)
- ? Support cooperative programs for market development, marketing, distribution, and extension

Question6: The growth of timber in the U.S. is greater than the rate of harvest. This is the case despite the lack of management on most private woodlands. Improved management, increased sustainable certification, more effective uses of low grade and small diameter wood, increased use of agroforestry, and increased use of wood waste for energy all represent major product development opportunities for family forests in the U.S.

The provision of funds in the 2007 Farm Bill for Research and Development on all of these forest product development opportunities would provide major economic and environmental benefits.

Funds also need to be made available for rural communities to conduct value-added, appropriately scaled activities that could significantly enhance benefits from forests. Farm policy should be closely linked to economic development efforts and should provide support for the development of local value-added enterprises for forest products, and to assist local forestry professionals in enhancing their skills.

While many federal programs are working to address some of these needs, there is a great disconnect between the resources and services and those who need them. The forest products market is rapidly changing- timber companies are divesting from landholdings, value-added processing is moving overseas, and the resources and opportunities available to small landowners and businesses have been diminished.

IF THE UNITED STATES IS GOING TO DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE TIMBER INDUSTRY THAT TRULY BENEFITS LANDOWNERS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES, IT WILL BE DEVELOPED BY PEOPLE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WHO ARE STEPPING FORWARD TO FILL THE VACUUM CREATED BY THESE TRENDS.

For these efforts to be successful, Farm Bill programs must support nonprofit organizations who are facilitating community-based programs in sustainable forestry and forest-based community economic development.